

**SHREWSBURY PUBLIC SCHOOLS  
100 MAPLE AVENUE  
SHREWSBURY, MASSACHUSETTS**

**MINUTES OF SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING**

**Wednesday, July 29, 2020**

Present via virtual participation: Ms. Sandy Fryc, Chairperson; Mr. Jon Wensky, Vice Chairperson (presiding); Dr. B. Dale Magee, Secretary; Ms. Lynsey Heffernan; Mr. Jason Palitsch; Mr. Patrick Collins, Assistant Superintendent for Finance and Operations; Ms. Amy B. Clouter, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum & Instruction; Ms. Barb Malone, Director of Human Resources; and Dr. Joseph Sawyer, Superintendent of Schools.

Due to the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, this meeting was not open to physical attendance by the public, but was broadcast live on SELCO Channels 29 & 329 and streamed live on the Shrewsbury Media Connection website. A complete audio/video recording of this meeting is available on the Shrewsbury Public Schools website.

The meeting was convened by Mr. Wensky at 7:01 pm.

**I. Public Participation**

Mr. Wensky encouraged anyone wishing to participate in the Public Participation portion of meetings to reach out to the School Committee via email in advance of the meeting.

**II. Chairperson's Report & Members' Reports**

Dr. Magee reported that he enjoyed cookies from the "Shrewsbury Smart Cookies" fundraiser that benefits the Shrewsbury Colonial Fund, and Mr. Wensky expressed appreciation to all organizers and attendees of the Graduation Part 2 ceremony for the Class of 2020 held at Shrewsbury High School (SHS) on July 25, 2020.

**III. Superintendent's Report**

Dr. Sawyer thanked an anonymous donor who has offered to match new donations up to a total of \$10,000, for donations made to the Colonial Fund through August 31st. Mr. Collins reported that the Business Office would begin mailing refunds for paid March 2020 services the following day for the Extended School Care, After School Activities Program, and Summer Spark Programs, and would mail refunds for busing, Full Day Kindergarten tuition, and Preschool tuition in two-three weeks; and noted that bus transportation registration was now open via the parent portal for students living two or more miles from school.

**IV. Time Scheduled Appointments:**

**A. Authorization of St. John's High School to Add Grades 7 & 8: Vote**

Dr. Sawyer noted that per Massachusetts state law, the School Committee approves the operation and expansion of private schools in town. He advised that St. John's High School would like to add grades 7 and 8, has a long history of providing high quality education in the community and has a viable proposed

middle-level grades program, and recommended that the Committee vote to authorize the addition of grades 7 and 8.

On a motion by Dr. Magee, seconded by Mr. Palitsch, the Committee voted unanimously to authorize Saint John's High School in Shrewsbury to add grades 7 and 8 to their existing configuration, so that it may operate as a private school offering grades 7 through 12. Roll call votes were as follows: Ms. Heffernan, yes; Mr. Palitsch, yes; Dr. Magee, yes; Ms. Fryc, yes; and Mr. Wensky, yes.

### **B. Required Reopening Planning Document Submission to the Department of Elementary & Secondary Education: Presentation & Vote**

Dr. Sawyer began the report with a summary of key messages, noted a webinar on coronavirus medical information for Shrewsbury Public Schools staff would be held the next evening, and advised a presentation on the recommended school reopening plan would be presented to the Committee at their next meeting. Ms. Clouter noted that planning for reopening was based on input from multiple stakeholders; summarized the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) timeline, and noted preliminary plans for in-person, remote, and a hybrid of in-person and remote learning models were due to DESE on July 31st. Ms. Clouter advised that a preference for 6 foot physical/social distancing in classrooms as well as expectations for remote learning based on feedback and data from staff and families led to the recommendation of an alternating in-person and remote hybrid model as the preferred plan for safe and effective reopening of schools. She provided information on how a hybrid model might be implemented, gave examples of different models, provided key data points on participation and schedule preferences, and outlined continued planning around reopening, including (per DESE) a ten day delay to the start of school for students to allow for staff training and orientation.

Committee members appreciated how the primacy of health and safety of staff and students factored into planning, but noted that acceptable standards of safety can vary; asked clarifying questions about Zoom technology etiquette, cohort sizes, masks, and the timeline for reopening planning; and expressed concerns for working parents during the remote learning portions of a hybrid plan relative to schedule consistency, financial hardship, and/or an inability to stay home.

On a motion by Mr. Palitsch, seconded by Dr. Magee, the Committee voted unanimously to authorize submission of the state-mandated reopening plan document containing an analysis of options for school reopening, and including the district's preferred option of a hybrid in-person and remote learning model on an alternating schedule, to the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. Roll call votes were as follows: Ms. Heffernan, yes; Dr. Magee, yes; Mr. Palitsch, yes; Ms. Fryc, yes; and Mr. Wensky, yes.

### **V. Curriculum**

None.

### **VI. Policy**

None.

### **VII. Finance & Operations**

None.

### **VIII. Old Business**

None.

## **IX. New Business**

None.

## **X. Approval of Minutes**

None.

## **XI. Executive Session**

- A. For the purpose of addressing G.L. c. 30A, § 21(a)(7) “[t]o comply with, or act under the authority of, any general or special law or federal grant-in-aid requirements” (“Purpose 7”), Open Meeting Law, G.L. c. 30A, §§ 22(f), (g) – for the purpose of reviewing, approving, and/or releasing executive session minutes.**
- B. For the purpose of addressing G.L. c. 30A, § 21(a)(3) “to discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining or litigation if an open meeting may have a detrimental effect of the bargaining or litigating position of the public body and the chair so declares” (“Purpose 3”) - the Shrewsbury Education Association Unit A; Shrewsbury Education Association Unit B; the Shrewsbury Paraprofessional Association; and/or the Shrewsbury Cafeteria Workers.**

Mr. Wensky requested a motion to adjourn to Executive Session:

A) for the purpose of addressing G.L. c. 30A, § 21(a)(7) “[t]o comply with, or act under the authority of, any general or special law or federal grant-in-aid requirements” (“Purpose 7”), Open Meeting Law, G.L. c. 30A, §§ 22(f), (g) – for the purpose of reviewing, approving, and/or releasing executive session minutes; and

B) for the purpose of addressing G.L. c. 30A, § 21(a)(3) “to discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining or litigation if an open meeting may have a detrimental effect of the bargaining or litigating position of the public body and the chair so declares” (“Purpose 3”) - the Shrewsbury Education Association Unit A; Shrewsbury Education Association Unit B; the Shrewsbury Paraprofessional Association; and/or the Shrewsbury Cafeteria Workers.

On a motion by Dr. Magee, seconded by Ms. Heffernan, on a roll call vote: Ms. Heffernan, yes; Dr. Magee, yes; Mr. Palitsch, yes; Ms. Fryc, yes; and Mr. Wensky, yes, the School Committee voted to adjourn to executive session at 8:18 pm.

## **XII. Adjournment**

On a motion by Ms. Heffernan, seconded by Mr. Palitsch, the committee unanimously agreed to adjourn the meeting at 9:14 pm. Roll call votes were as follows: Mr. Palitsch, yes; Mr. Wensky, yes; Ms. Heffernan, yes; Dr. Magee, yes, and Ms. Fryc, yes.

Respectfully submitted,

Elizabeth McCollum, Clerk

Documents referenced:

Saint John's High School Grades 7 & 8 Information

DESE School Reopening Plans and Recommendation Document

School Reopening Plans and Recommendation Slide Presentation